What is the disability?

- One of the most common mental health conditions in the UK.
- 1 in 5 people feel anxious “nearly all of the time” or “a lot of the time”.
- On average people with another disability are more anxious than people without a disability.
- Only 1 in 20 people say they never feel anxious.
- 1/3 of students said they cope by hiding themselves away from the world.

Anxiety describes feelings of unease, worry and fear. These are the feelings we all get in a situation that is difficult or threatening. The anxiety stops when you get used to the situation, the situation changes or when you leave. However, these common feelings of anxiety that we all experience are more intense and present most or all of the time for people who have an anxiety disorder.

Where can I find out more?

- www.mind.org.uk
- www.mentalhealth.org.uk

Where to get help in College?

If you have this diagnosis or have experienced the symptoms described above for a while you can get advice and support from:

- Community, Wellbeing and Student Outreach by emailing welfare@rhul.ac.uk.
- The University counselling service in FW 171, call in or email counselling@rhul.ac.uk to arrange an appointment.
- The Disability and Dyslexia Service in FW 149 and 143, call in or email disability-dyslexia@rhul.ac.uk to arrange an appointment.
- The Clarence Medical Centre in FE, call their reception on 01784 443131 or call in to book an appointment.

Please note these services are open between 9:00am – 5:00pm Monday-Friday during term time.

Useful numbers:

Royal Holloway Security: 01784 443063
NHS: 111
Out of Hours medical care: 01753 865773
Samaritans: 08457 909090
Surrey Police (non-emergency): 101

The information and quotes in this flyer are from mind.org.uk and www.rcpsych.ac.uk.
Effects on life as a student:

- Difficulty concentrating and remembering things.
- Fear of social situations may cause the student to avoid lectures, and possibly cause issues leaving the house.
- Intense fear regarding situations where the focus is on the student, e.g. presentations.
- Medication can cause students to become drowsy, affecting their cognitive ability.
- Sleep disturbance may affect their immune system, they’re more likely to catch a cold.

The most commonly diagnosed anxiety disorders are:

- Generalised anxiety disorder (GAD): Broad diagnosis. Often anxious for a long time but not about anything specific in their lives.
- Panic disorder: Experience panic attacks. They constantly feel afraid of having another panic attack, to the point where this fear can trigger the attack.
- Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD): Anxiety leads them to experience obsessive unwelcome thoughts, images, urges or doubts. It also triggers compulsions and repetitive behaviours that they feel they must complete.
- Phobias: Intense fear or anxiety about something which may not be harmful to you.
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD): Experiencing strong feelings of anxiety, flashbacks and nightmares after a traumatic event. They often relive the fear and anxiety experienced during the actual event.

Effects on life as a student:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body</th>
<th>Mind</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fast or irregular heartbeats</td>
<td>Feeling worried a lot of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweating</td>
<td>Feeling tired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face goes pale</td>
<td>Feeling tense, nervous, on the edge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dry mouth</td>
<td>Having a sense of dread</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nausea, stomach cramps, indigestion, increased/decreased need to use the toilet</td>
<td>Feeling like other people can see you’re anxious and are looking at you</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muscle tension and pains</td>
<td>Having a busy mind, difficulty concentrating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trembling</td>
<td>Dwelling on negative experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbness, pins and needles, tingling</td>
<td>Feeling restless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing panic attacks</td>
<td>Feeling emotionally numb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“For me, anxiety feels as if everyone in the world is waiting for me to trip up, so that they can laugh at me. It makes me feel nervous and unsure whether the next step I take is the best way forward.”

Mind.org.uk

Tips for support

1. Where appropriate try to provide lecture materials in advance, allow students to record lectures, and allow these students extra time to respond to oral questions.
2. Empathise with the student, the majority of us have experienced anxiety at some stage.
3. Try to be kind and non-judgmental if someone looks anxious, the likelihood is they are worried that you are looking at them because of this.
4. Become aware that some individuals suffering from anxiety find it difficult to knock on doors. Equally, they can feel ‘trapped’ if you have a meeting with them, leave your door open.
5. Ask about their symptoms and coping mechanisms, what problems do they predict?
6. Avoid putting students on the spot during lectures or seminars.
7. Encourage them to seek help if they are struggling.
8. Avoid pressuring them to face their fear head on, this can make them more anxious.
9. Avoid trying to discredit or defuse their fear with a rational argument; a calm and accepting approach sometimes works better.
10. Keep information regarding deadlines and timings clear and concise to avoid overwhelming or confusing the student.
11. Be mindful of timings when sending emails to students with anxiety. For example sending an email about a warning on a Friday evening, the student will potentially have to wait until the office reopens on Monday to talk to someone about this matter. This can exacerbate their anxiety.